Down ISIS!

Somewhere in Marawi, May, 2017.

Jacob and Matt kept fighting, “I will be by your side comrade.” Jacob told him and Matt nodded, they kept fighting with their rifles, the gunshots echoed, until something hit, Matt felt a sting, a bullet crashed through his body, “NO!” Jacob cried as he held his wound, “STAY WITH ME PLEASE!” Jacob screamed.

It was the summer of 2007, Jacob was scared of school, he was always bullied, “Dad, I don't want to go to school.” Jacob hugged his dad, “If you are scared of school, I will tell you something.” Jacob’s father tells him, “You have to be a strong son, always be strong.” His dad drops Jacob off and drives away.

During lunch, Jacob’s father forgot to give him money, Jacob went to the field, he ate grass until his bullies spotted him, “Why is he eating grass!” The bullies laughed and went close to Jacob, “You're just a loser you shit.” One of the bullies called him out and kicked Jacob to the field, “This is why you were a cow!” The bullies kept beating him up until someone showed up, “Stop bullying him.” Matt showed up, “What are you gonna do trouble boy?” The bullies laughed at him since Matt always had trouble with fighting bullies, even self defense, “You stupid shit!” Matt charged and knocked out one of the bullies, he kept fighting with fists, his bloody knuckles starting to form as he punched and knocked them out brutally, Matt gets the last bully and kicks his nose, then he bashes his head to the concrete floor 5 times.

“You are suspended for 1 week!” The principal asked Matt to leave the school, Jacob watched for a distance, scared.

It was April, 2017, Jacob went to the bar, he drank 5 beers, he needed to decide, join the war, or don’t but get either killed by the ISIS terrorists, until he found his friend Matt on accident, who drank 10 beers, “You drunk? Because you're drinking too much.” Jacob sat beside him, “Man, I don't care.” Matt kept drinking, “So you joining the war?” Jacob asked him, “Yeah probably.” Matt stops drinking and thinks about it, “Okay.” Jacob leaves the bar as he walks to his house.

It was May, 2017, “You comrades will say here, got me?” General Kolshad gets his paper, “Jacob?” Kolshad asked his name, “Here sir.” Jacob responded, eventually everyone’s names were called under Kolshad, “Now comrades, let's go train in the camp.” Kolshad leads the comrades.

Matt, Jacob, and the other comrades were lined up, “PUSH UPS NOW!” Kolshad blew his whistle, the soldiers did push ups, they sweated as they kept going, “NOW DO JUMPING JACKS!” Kolshad whistled again as a signal, they were soaked in sweat as they trained, “NOW DO THE OBSTACLE COURSE!” Kolshad orders the soldiers to sit in position, “FORWARD!” Kolshad whistles, Matt, Jacob, and the comrades ran through, Jacob climbed up and kept running through, eventually, they were covered in mud and water due to heavy rain, “NOW GO

BACK TO YOUR BEDS AND SLEEP!” Kolshad leads the men to their beds, then he leaves the camp.

It was the next day, “Good luck men.” Kolshad salutes to his men as they entered the military van, it drives off as the van roars, Jacob looked at the window, his weapon held tight, then, the van was now in the danger zone, known as Marawi, “Okay, once we drop off, we need to advance to the right 3 story building, then we open fire at the ISIS terrorists.” Corporal Rafael calls out to everybody, “Yes sir!” The men saluted, they prepared their weapons, “ADVANCE!” Rafael and the comrades opened the doors quickly of the van then they advanced to the building, the terrorists fired wildly, making it dangerous, some soldiers were shot, but Rafael’s men managed to reach the 3 story building, “OPEN FIRE NOW!” Rafael and his comrades opened fire on the second floor, gunshots echoed louder, the smoke covering the area, the terrorists were killed as they encountered a firefight, until one comrade put his head up, “HEY PUT YOUR HEAD DOWN YOU DUMBASS!” Matt called the soldier out, but it was too late, the soldier’s head was blown up, blood soaked everywhere, covering Matt and the soldiers with blood, “FUCK!” Matt kicks the dead corpse and keeps shooting, Jacob reloads but suddenly, he was hit in the head, but he realized the bullet penetrated through his helmet, Jacob’s eyes wide open due to the trauma, “GET UP JACOB!” Matt grabs his arm to get him up, Jacob goes back to position and keeps firing, until Rafael hears a breakout downstairs, “THROW GRENADES! THE TERRORISTS ARE ATTACKING THE SECOND FLOOR!” Rafael and the others threw grenades, the terrorists died as the explosions were activated, spreading debris and dead corpses, the muffled screams were heard behind the door, “MOVE TO THE SCHOOL NOW! WE ARE REPORTED THERE ARE HOSTAGES THERE!” Rafael and his men ran down to go to the school, they kept going as gunshots tried to hit them, finally, they reached the school.

“What school is this?” Matt asked, “It is the Marawi High School, we need to get these teenagers out of here.” Rafael responded and his comrades entered the school, suddenly, an ambush of terrorists from all sides fired, starting another firefight, one soldier was killed, Rafael gets a RPG and pulls the trigger, the recoil made Rafael go backwards, the explosion killed massive amounts of terrorists, it was fired 5 times in a row, killing more hordes of terrorists, “MOVE MOVE MOVE!” Rafael and his comrades went to a classroom, as they entered, 5 terrorists were disemboweling hostages, the other comrades were disgusted and traumatized, “FIRE!” Rafael and the comrades fired in horror, killing the terrorists, “Shit, they are monsters.” Matt looked closely, the hostages dead, until an ambush of terrorists were running to the classroom, “LOCK THE DOORS AND BARRICADE!” Rafael and the others locked the doors then barricaded the doors with tables and chairs, “SET YOUR POSITION!” Rafael calls everybody to get in positions, their rifles aimed at the doors, the terrorists barged in, “FIRE!” Rafael and his comrades fired their weapons, the barrage of bullets killing hordes of terrorists, “THROW GRENADES!” Rafael and the comrades threw grenades all at once, finally clearing out the horde, the terrorists’ bodies in the floor, they kept moving to save the hostages, “Okay comrades, we saved 500 hostages in total, we need to lead them safely to the evacuation zone.” Rafael asked everybody for ideas, “Sir, let's try to go to that van, I think it's clear.” Jacob had an idea, “Okay that’s accepted, now lets go.” Rafael and his team quickly advances to the van and drives, until a barrage of gunfire punctures through the van, panic starts to erupt as one

by one gets killed, “DRIVE FASTER!” Matt sticks out his rifle and shoots at the terrorists, the firefight continues as chaos erupted inside the van, finally, the chaos ended as Rafael and his men got out of the van with only 200 civilians left, they safely got the civilians into the evacuation zone.

“Okay you men, let's take a rest, you all did great.” Kolshad admired the men, but he did not realize what the men had seen. Jacob went to his bed, he couldn't sleep, the aftermath of the van, he got his beer and drank it to calm him down, but it won’t go away, “Are you okay?’ Matt sat beside him, “Yeah.” Jacob kept drinking, “Just tell me man, I won't get angry.” Matt waited for a response, “I can’t okay? It's too horrible for me.” Jacob gets another glass of beer and drinks more, “You have to stop man, you have to talk to me.” Matt tried to communicate, but Jacob couldn't tell, “Just later okay?” Jacob asked him to leave, “Okay fine.” Matt left, worried about him.

“Okay men, we are going to continue the siege following the orders of president Duterte.” Kolshad announced the news as he kept reading the paper, “Now, we try to advance to the Marawi Hospital, as there are more dangerous terrorists out there.” Kolshad ends it, “Yes sir.” The comrades go to the van, “Good luck heroes.” Kolshad salutes and leaves, Jacob trembles, he doesn’t know what's coming, “Be strong son, always be strong.” His father’s quote echoed Jacob, but he can’t, he feels like he is going to collapse, his father died due to a car crash, his mother died from old age, he is now going to fight.

“Okay men, once we drop off, we advance to the hospital while taking cover, just be fast.” Rafael orders everybody to prepare inside the van, Jacob gets his rifle and prepares, “ADVANCE!” Rafael and the others kicks the doors in the van open and advances fast as gunshots flew from the sky, the some of the soldiers were shot due to the raid, fortunately, Rafael’s men finally reached the hospital, they raided the first room, a terrorist tackled Jacob, “FUCK!” Jacob gets his knife and stabs the terrorist in the neck, blood stained his hands but Jacob keeps stabbing him in the neck, “Jacob you got to stop!” Matt gets Jacob out, “Now lets go.” Matt gets Jacob up, the raid continues, until they find the leader, Isnilon, who was the leader of the ISIS, “Down ISIS!” Jacob held him at gunpoint with his rifle steady, “Fuck you.” Isnilon shoots, Jacob closes his eyes.

Rafael ran quickly and pushed him out, getting shot instead, then Rafael shot back, killing Isnilon with his pistol. Jacob wakes up, traumatized, Jacob screams in horror as Rafael’s head has a bullet, “CALM DOWN!” Matt gets Jacob out of the way, until a call from Rafael, Matt runs to his body and answers the call in the radio, “Hello there, your commander Kolshad is here, he is just a little toy to us.” The unknown person laughed, “Who is this?” Matt answered back, “Here, take a speech from my toy.” The unknown person gives it to someone, “HELP PLEASE! THEY HAVE METAL BARS TO BEAT ME UP!” The voice was Kolshad, screaming for help, “Now you have 5 minutes to save him, good luck.” The unknown person ended the call, “We need to save him!” Matt calls everybody to move to the captured base where ISIS occupied the Philippine base.

It went on for 2 minutes and they reached it, “Let’s go!” Matt breaks in, but what they saw was horrifying, it smelled like sulfur, until they saw Kolshad's mutilated body, its organs taken off, his neck opening like a trapdoor, Jacob was about to vomit, “Don’t worry.” Matt covered his eyes and looked closer, until a group of terrorists barged in and ambushed, “TAKE COVER!” Matt gets Jacob out including the others, starting a firefight, Jacob gets his rifle and fights back, gunshots echo as smoke covers the area, the firefight continues as more groups of terrorists go to all sides, over numbering the Philippine Forces, “CHARGE!” Matt gets Kolshad’s corpse and uses it as a meat shield, he keeps firing through, killing large numbers of terrorists using the meat shield, “GET MY RPG!” Matt called Jacob to get his RPG, Jacob passed it then Matt pulled the trigger, the explosion shook the place, their ears ringing, the place was now in flames, Matt kicked Kolshad’s body out, “LETS KEEP MOVING!” Matt called everybody and they went forward.

They found 3 terrorists, “THERE ARE MORE LEADERS OUT THERE! GIVE US THEIR LOCATION!” The comrades aimed at the 3, “Wait, are you the bullies?” Jacob went in, “Yeah, kiss my ass!” The 3 terrorists laughed but suddenly, they were instantly killed by Matt with 3 shots using a rifle, “Lets go, we need to capture them.” Matt goes through and suddenly, more hordes of terrorists ambush from all sides, Matt gets shot in the helmet, Matt gets his helmet, “FIRE!” Matt orders the others to their positions to keep firing, the gunshots and smoke were covering their vision, Jacob kills one by one, reloading and keeps shooting, “I will be by your side comrade.” Matt patted Jacob’s shoulder, Jacob nodded and kept shooting, suddenly, Matt was shot, “NO!” Jacob cried, “STAY WITH ME PLEASE!” Jacob dragged him to a safe place, “Damn bastards!” Matt gets 2 machine guns, 5 C4’s, “THIS IS FOR MARAWI!” Matt advances through the open space, dodging bullets as he kills massive amounts of terrorists, he throws 5 C4 bombs, killing 25 terrorists, until Matt gets shot, “You thought you won?” The Maute brothers pointed their rifles at Matt, “Fuck you too!” Matt sees a gas tank and shoots, the explosion rings through the area.

The area was quiet, Matt went closer to find Jacob, he found him, covered in debris, his machine guns still in his hands, “Jacob?” Matt wakes him up, Jacob wakes up, “Matt? Is this heaven?” Jacob stood up, “No you silly, we are on earth.” Matt responded light-heartedly, but he knew he was worried, “Let’s go.” The other comrades left the area for good.

The Philippine Forces were back in Manila, people cheered and clapped, Jacob and Matt walked through the parade, “So, is it really the end?” Jacob asked Matt, “Yeah.” Matt responded as they kept moving.

Through the years, they survived COVID-19 and lived a normal life, Matt and Jacob’s legacy for the battles will be remembered in the heart of Marawi.